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Memorial Day. Oration

By

Charles A. Sumner

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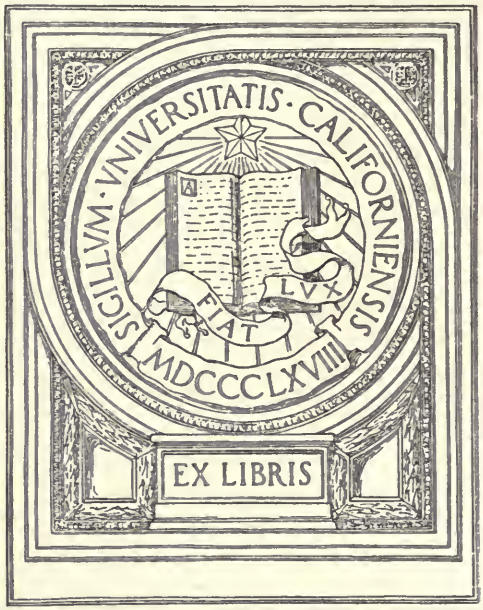

ROBERT ERNEST COWAN

Memorial Day.

ORATION

—BY—

CHARLES A. SUMNER,

Of Geo. H. Thomas Post, No. 2, G. A. R.
Dept. of California.

Delivered at the Grand Opera House, San Francisco,

WEDNESDAY EVENING, MAY 30, 1888.

OBJECTS OF THE GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC.

1. To preserve and strengthen those kind and fraternal feelings which bind together the soldiers, sailors and marines who united to suppress the late rebellion, and to perpetuate the memory and history of the dead.

2. To assist such former comrades in arms as need help and protection, and to extend needful aid to the widows and orphans of those who have fallen.

3. To maintain true allegiance to the United States of America, based upon a paramount respect for, and fidelity to the National Constitution and laws; to discountenance whatever tends to weaken loyalty, incites to insurrection, treason or rebellion, or in any manner impairs the efficiency and permanency of our free institutions; and to encourage the spread of universal liberty, equal rights and justice to all men.

SAN FRANCISCO:
JAMES H. BARRY, PRINTER, 429 MONTGOMERY STREET.
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ORATION.

On being introduced by Hon. Henry C. Dibble, Mr. Sumner said:

Mr. President, Comrades of the Grand Army of the Republic, Ladies and Gentlemen: It is right that one day "of all the weary year" should be set apart and dedicated to the commemoration of the deeds of the civil war; and especially to the grateful consideration of the record of those who fought and fell in that struggle, and thus contributed most indubitably and effectually to the achievement of the greatest of triumphs for the institutions of civil liberty. It should be a separate time; it cannot properly be joined with other objects. Our great national anniversary still largely if not wholly retains its ancient significance, and all its former precedence;—only enhanced, indeed, by the glory of the valor and the Union victories of the later conflict. The birthday of a President or General, however renowned and worthy of special remembrance he might be, could not have been fitly selected for such a purpose, as undue personal emphasis and invidious distinctions would then have been among the inevitable and discordant results. Nor is there a single notable event of the war—of battle or decree—not even the issuance of the emancipation proclamation itself—that so stamps and dignifies the hours, with such direct and related influences, as to imperatively or justifyingly control this appointment. It must be a day by itself. And so it is. The pre-eminent propriety of such a designation, isolated and peculiar, and the excellence of the judgment that named the day on which we have assembled, and conducted and nearly concluded our exercises, have constituted the frequent theme of felicitous and sufficient speech.

When the roses bloom all over the land, the long procession is formed, in city or town, with the regular or citizen soldiery and uniformed civic associations as escorts

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or honoring attendants; at the head or in the midst of which march the Union army veterans; and so, in simple but martial line, they go to the graves of dead comrades, and cover their dust with flowers.

The ceremony is becoming. It is so as a manifestation of affection for the heroes gone,—recollection of their labors and dangers and sufferings; and as the strongest and tenderest of reminders and stimulants respecting our own continued and bounden duty as surviviug patriots. More than this it is:—as testimony before all observing men and women in this country, in mournful but unequivocal celebration of a consummation by campaigns and battles, over which every true citizen should rejoice—in common with every intelligent lover of liberty throughout the inhabitable globe. More than these it is:—in testimony, instructive, explicit, inspiring and enduring, to the generations that are with us but coming after us, and to all the generations that are to come, of the justice of that cause for which we were originally enrolled in the Grand Army of the Republic.

And how fit the date, with a retrospect of precisely 27 years ago. We are at the close of the season in which the war began. How eventful was the spring of 1861! How great th echange that then came over the life and thought of the people—during that brief period of time!

Notwithstanding the rapidly deepening blackness of the clouds of rebellion that gathered and o'ercast our country from the Presidential election of 1860 to the latter part of March, 1861, most reluctant was the vast majority of the citizens of the northern States, and of some of the border commonwealths, to admit that satisfactory compromise was impossible, and that we must accept the dire arbitrament of arms. To the very last, the hope was lively and intense in the breasts of loyal men, that actual war might and would be averted. To the very verge of craven submission had public pledges and private persuasion gone, with a view to mollify and placate the leaders of secession, before the first gun was fired on Fort Sumter.

With remarkable readiness and celerity was the summons of the President for the respective quota of militia,

under the call for 75,000 troops, answered by the Governors and people of most of the loyal States. But in the departure to the national capital or "the front," of regiments and companies so required and measurably expectant of requisition, there was by no means a popular abandonment of trust and confidence in the ultimate, speedy, peaceful settlement of the disagreements and difficulties which the chief executive had outlined and deplored,—with only the sad record of the Charleston harbor fortress once attacked by and surrendered to a rebellious foe, and a few trifling skirmishes on the border, to stain the pages of our national history.

On the 4th of May, 1861, however, the proclamation of the President for volunteers was issued;—the progress and cohesion of the movement for secession having then proceeded to such lengths as to exclude any doubt or expectation against the fact that war had commenced, and that a desperate and prolonged struggle between different sections of the Union, already defined by so-called ordinances of repeal and separation, was unavoidable.

Already in every northern city of considerable size and transportation facilities, the parks and adjacent commons had been appropriated for the barracks of enlisted men,—temporarily housed for the discipline of a week, or the lodging of a night, while on their ordered way to the scene of threatened hostilities. Then it was that the soft music of the piano and viol was hushed or drowned in nearly every town and village of the northern States; while the air reverberated with the stirring roll of the drum and the shrill shriek of the fife and the commanding blare of the bugle. Then it was that father and mother, and brother and sister, and wife and maiden-betrothed, bade good-bye to the youthful recruit, as he joined the awkward squad on the village green or marched down the main street of his native hamlet for the last time;—with a consciousness on their part, in bitter anguish, of the almost absolute certainty of a hazard of war decreed for him on some bloody field of combat. A bastard wit and humor of this age and country have sought to make mockery of, and bring perpetual derision upon these tearful and prayerful partings, or their recitals; but we knew

and should here and now with profoundest sympathy recall and commemorate such heart-breaking sacrifices and consecrations,—then made by the closest of relatives and the dearest of friends,—the irrepressible, attending signs and demonstrations of sorrow, but serving to show the strength and earnestness of the wills aroused, and increasing the actual value, we know not how many fold, of the champions thus bequeathed and dispatched for the preservation of our national integrity and the unshorn supremacy of the flag of our Union.

And as for the raw volunteer:—how fared it with him in mind and resolution, on the day of enlistment, or at the hour of farewell to friends and home?

He who seeks to cast suspicion upon the sincerity or bravery of the rebellious foe, would but aid in belittling the severity of the struggle on the part of the loyal forces, and detract from the honor and the glory of the final triumph. Slight, indeed, if any, was the real doubt or deception on this score, in the direction deprecated, in the minds of northern men. It did not require the actual shock of battle to teach our boys the tremendous delusion that would repose on such a grave misapprehension. At the very least, full faith and credit was given by them to every rational claim for intrepidity and even reckless daring on the part of the enemy they were summoned to confront.

Nor did some plain and powerful reasons for an average disparity in physical and educated adaptability for the service, at the very outset, escape the thoughtful and appreciative consideration of the Union volunteers, and especially of most of those who hailed from the New England commonwealths. The far greater proportion of the citizens of the sunny South who had been accustomed to the use of deadly weapons, thoroughly trained in horsemanship, and tutored and skillful as marksmen in sport or on former fields of conflict, was a fact well understood among our Union soldiers, and the subject of reference in many of their camp-fire conversations, before the day of their participation in skirmish arrived or the thunder of pitched battle sounded in their ears. Reared in a more genial clime, and on that and other kindred accounts

having had more leisure and better opportunity for the species of exercise calculated to render them nearly fitted for a military service, and with natural and cultivated tastes and dispositions all in that line of activity, it was well known, and passed into daily dialogue, that the first to answer the appeal of the Confederate authorities for troops, would in all probability be, in the direction indicated—and without the slightest offensive disparagement of our own people of the North—the abler occupants of fort and field. And then there was the greater readiness for such a strike, born and nurtured in a condition of society that eulogized the duelist, and justified and commended and even commanded the settlement of many personal disagreements by the single combat, with sword or gun. And beyond these, and perhaps at first most formidable of affecting differences asserted, or sometimes conceded (to select one other from numerous points of emotional equipment and incentive, that flash in upon us in such a contemplation)—there was the assumption, so reasonable on the first suggestion, so artfully and studiously impressed—the assumption on the part of the rebel soldier, or in his behalf, that he was fighting, or about to fight, for the preservation of the sanctity of his own fireside and his family honor:—an idea which was taken for a text in the composition of ten thousand calls to arms in the South, and blazoned on hundreds of banners that were tautened in every city and town within the bounds of the confederacy;—that formed the basis and substance of many mottoes and rallying cries, quoted—often with half-concealed, sometimes with undisguised, approval—by the traitorous portion of the northern press, and thus flaunted in the very faces of the men meditating on their possible obligation to enlist, or already beginning their term of service in the ranks. We are not alluding to any admitted distinction or disparity in native courage. We are merely touching that which was fully and creditably recognized and realized in the first months of the rebellion—the time of preliminary preparation—by the great mass of Union volunteers,—some of whom are now sleeping in yonder cemeteries with your lilies above their heads. There was no reason why the combatants on the Union

side should not have expected to meet at first, armies at least, equal to their own in numerical strength. There was reason to believe that the boasted capability of one to two or more, so often reported to have been made by Confederate Captains, had a shadow of foundation or justification in the schooling or recreations of boyhood and early manhood; and to the muscle and nerve that were his as a conscious inheritance, the Yankee lad in the loyal hosts felt that he would need, and must add, the vigor and energy that should come from an enlightened assurance of a better cause, and the strength of patriotic resolution instilled by parental teachings and ancestral example.

But while there were warranted and while there were excessive misgivings on the one hand—in no fashion or degree due to any inherent lack of manly sentiment or will—there were unsustained anticipations, in the same line, on the other.*

Nothing is more gratifying for emphasis in the records, few matters of interest and proper for comment at such an hour, are more deserving of mention, than the story or illustrations of the rapid advance on the part of the loyal volunteer in his proficiency in the art of war. But stranger yet—and strange that it has not been made the subject of published reference and remark ere now—was the almost metamorphosis, where there was stamina for such a change, from the actual or seemingly weak to the indisputably rugged man. If age, or chronic or organic ailment, had seriously impaired the natural animal powers of the recruit, there was, of course, a quick relief from active duty at the front, a discharge for disability, or a detail to clerical or culinary service in the rear; but the vitality adequate for building up a strong constitution being latent, the campaign experience in the Union ranks, in this "unjust and unnatural rebellion,"—as General Winfield Scott described it, in his brief letter of resignation,—often had its immediate individual beneficence, its personal, physical compensation, at the very beginning of life in tent and trench. The bloom of sturdy

*"You have proved that Union men, fighting for the preservation of our Government, are more than a match for our misguided and erring brothers."—Gen. George B. McClellan.

health not infrequently came speedily into the face of the new recruit, who, late a pale and cadaverous student beneath the midnight lamp in his college room, would have afforded infinite amusement to the lithe and sinewy gentleman of the Confederate forces, could he but have seen his future antagonist when signing the company roll. So looked, and so went forth William F. Bartlett, from the halls of Harvard University; a stripling that barely passed the examination of the recruiting surgeon,—so frail of physique did he seem to that medical adviser. Yet he lived and toiled in the service, to thrive in body and in soul. He lived to participate fiercely in numerous skirmishes and battles, from Ball's Bluff to Port Hudson; and again in Virginia before Petersburg, where he was selected to lead an assaulting brigade on the occasion of the celebrated mine explosion. He lived to receive and at least to partially recover from three dreadful wounds; hastening from hospitals, half healed of his horrid blows, to assume new regimental commands coming from his native Massachusetts; eager to take their fighting orders under the gleam of his martial blade. With crippled limbs and lacerated breast, which periodically bled afresh, he survived the war for more than ten years;—an especial marvel of vitativeness to those who saw him when he first shouldered his musket;—dying and borne to his tomb amid the aching heart-throbs of all who knew him, and who loved him for his many virtues and his valor.

So went forth and physically recuperated, and fought and bled and conquered, and gained deserved promotion, during countless risks and hurts by shot and sword, unnumbered others, of like apparent delicacy of frame and amiability of mind. The brawny sons of hardiest toil were at first most desired, best approved, and as a rule at first most efficient at the front; but the spindle-legged "counter-jumpers," and sedentaries of every honorable calling that lightly taxed the muscular part of man, soon came to fairly rival the accustomed laborer of the farm and the workshop, with their agile and thorough and persistent performances in the most exacting line of soldierly duty. And the stalwart comrades of the 69th N. Y., from its

high and acknowledged plane of matchless physical endurance and unsurpassed bravery, with noble candor were soon among the first and foremost to confess and cheer the exhibition of whip-cord toughness and tenacity, given in the hottest of contests, by the dandy 5th.

It has been the long-time custom of many Union men, soldiers and civilians alike, to speak with a sorrow largely mixed with severest censure—and only so to speak —respecting officers and troops engaged, or ordered to take part, in the first battle of Bull Run Only within a closely recent period has the familiarly summarized verdict of competent and disinterested foreign critics—"A well planned and stoutly fought battle on the part of the Union forces"—been listened to with any patience or tolerance by the majority of our people who pretend to have any intimate and analysing acquaintance with the reports of the action, or any intelligent judgment upon the entire conduct of the fight. But it has been and is now to be noted, that from the dates of that series of skirmishes which bears the one name mentioned, there was no repetition of that vaunt of man to man superiority coming from any reputable military rebel source. That fact itself should be enough to vindicate the participants from every reproachful taunt and every base insinuation.

From the official reports of the respective commanders, each speaking for its own side, there was a combined force of 18,000 Union soldiers thrown against 27,000 rebel troops; both sides equally well equipped in arms, but the latter fighting always, of course, with the advantage of a thorough knowledge of the country occupied and contended over, and with the added and larger advantage of breastworks and tree-shields for musketry defence, and masked embrasures for ambuscade artillery practice. The difference in numbers of killed and wounded, taking the reckoning from similar authorities, was so small, as to demonstrate that under the circumstances—with less number of Union men and disadvantages of position, and cavalry deficiency, and with open presentation—the greatest execution relatively, by far, was done by the "raw, undisciplined" Boys in Blue,—on

whose heads so much of unmerited obloquy has so long been showered.*

The onsets of the 69th New York—made so widely familiar by accounts from both sides, that tally with exactness—and the twice re-formed in the midst of fire, and thrice on-hurled of the 79th New York, with the dauntless Col. Cameron—rallying with the cry of "Come on Scots"—at their head—together with the scenes of the deaths of the two commanding Colonels on the field—form separate pictures from authentic history that live in vivid colors in the proud but sorrowful memories of many to-night—one close and interested spectator, now the head of this military department, being here with us, to recall at this instant the battle and the heroism; pictures or outlines whose full portraiture and landscape shall be faithfully laid on many a brilliant canvas of the future.

Over the graves of more than 500 of the killed and wounded who fell at Stone's Bridge and on the edge of Manassas Plain, our comrades in the East, in Washington, and elsewhere on and in the Virginia border, have this day laid their floral offerings and fired their honoring salutes.

And there and then rebel as well as Union prisoners were taken, and rebel as well as Union regimental banners, were seized and held. The prisoners were subsequently exchanged. The battle flags were not.

Another, one other record of similar import,—coming from the other and hither side of the region of regular hostilities between representative combatants for the Union and for the Confederacy,—one out of the thousand besides,—is at hand,—for the very briefest glance, to-night.

With such discretion committed to him by Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, Frank Blair, on

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*Gen. Beauregard, in his official report, puts the number of his force on the 18th of July, at 17,000 effective men; and on the 21st, 27,000, which included 6,200 sent from Gen. Johnston and 1,700 brought up by Gen. Holmes from Fredericksburg—Tenney's History of the Rebellion, page 79.

"We crossed Bull Run with about 18,000 men of all arms."—Official Report of Mayor Gen. McDowell.

"Rash it certainly was to attack Gen. Beauregard on ground which he himself had selected and elaborately fortified."—New Orleans Delta, July 28, 1861.

the 30th of May, 1861—exactly 27 years ago this night—drew from his pocket and properly presented an order, which placed at the head of loyal troops in Missouri, Nathaniel Lyon, a native of Connecticut and an officer in the regular army.

Subsequently stationed near Springfield, southwestern Missouri, on the 9th of August, 1861, Gen. Lyon learned of the junction of the forces of Generals Price and Ben McCullough—the last named rebel officer being a man of great experience in military matters, and of distinction as a cunning planner and a plucky fighter—and also ascertained that the consolidated troops, aggregating 23,000 men, were only ten or twelve miles distant. It was notorious that this rebel host was composed of "the very best western and southwestern fighting material"—such having been the common newspaper boast of disloyal editors in Missouri, before the junction;—which signified, of course, a combination of most of the elements that go to make up a bold and determined foe.

Coming to the conclusion, after as full and careful a review of the situation as the information he possessed and the time allowed for deliberation would permit, that it was his duty to at least make a "strong feint" of an attack upon this formidable enemy, Gen. Lyon did not hesitate to march to the encounter; although his own force amounted to less than 5,300 men, all told; of which number Gen. Sigel—who did not directly participate in the main action that followed—had more than 1,300. The enemy's position was on Wilson's Creek, along a distance of four or five miles, and in the ravines and on the heights adjacent. The assault was made under the immediate direction of Gen. Lyon, and for three hours was continued, with varying fortunes, but with no movement of conceded repulse or retirement on the part of the entire body of the audacious assailants. In the fourth hour, after being thrice wounded severely—once having his horse killed under him, at the same time that he received a shot in the right leg—and while engaged in re-forming the 2d Kansas and leading it to a fresh onset, fell Gen. Nathaniel Lyon, with a rebel bullet in his heart. Of him Major S. D. Sturgis, who succeeded to the command,

wrote from that evening's camp: "Wherever the battle most furiously raged, there Gen. Lyon was to be found." And in his formal, official report of the battle, after narrating events up to the happening of this great calamity, the same commanding officer proceeds: "Thus gloriously fell as brave a soldier as ever drew a sword; a man whose honesty of purpose was proverbial; a noble patriot; and one who held his life as nothing when his country demanded it of him." What words could be added to these, to rouse to keenest pulse our reverential tribute of memory and affection for the spirit of such a man!

And of the battle of Wilson's Creek itself, the authentic and now undisputed record says: "The Confederates twice in its progress came up to the Federal lines with a Union flag flying; [the Union forces that were thus approached then momentarily expecting the coming of Gen. Sigel and his 1,300 men,] and thus deceived the Federal troops, until they could get so close as to pour a most destructive fire upon them." And yet even this "ruse"—as the rebels playfully named it—on the part of the Confederate commanders, produced no panic and little confusion in the Union ranks.

During three more hours, after the fall of Gen. Lyon, the contest was continued, at the close of which time the enemy was fairly forced from its advantageous positions, back to its camps, and even still farther to the rear.

Major Sturgis in the concluding portion of his report declares, that the best eulogium he could pass upon the 3,700 Union soldiers engaged in this encounter, was by narrating the facts: that after a fatiguing night's march, they attacked an enemy outnumbering them by over six to one—23,000 to 3,700—and after a bloody conflict of six hours—at the expiration of which the rebel forces retired from their original line, and ceased to contend—withdrew at leisure to their base of supplies, near the town of Springfield.

In endeavoring to estimate and fairly consider the debt due the Union soldiers of the Civil War, especially to be recalled and reviewed this day, with a foremost purpose of begetting or invoking a mood for earnest and profound thankfulness toward those who fought and fell,

or otherwise suffered unto death in the holy cause, what better, what more suggestive and impressive act of reference is possible, than that which places before you the map of the country that would have been authoritatively outlined and printed, if the Rebellion had been successful? Think what your children, coming home from the Public Schools, would have recited to you, this week, from the lesson in geography that is now embraced in a single national title and subordinate enumeration! See the dark red line, dotted with fortress hexagons, across our dear mother country's breast. Instead of telling of the one great Republic with the boundaries that were and are, comprehending the Thirty-eight Commonwealths, beginning with the precious names that cover the territory of the glorious Old Original Thirteen, your children must have answered with a description of a Union and a separate "Confederate States of North America";—the latter responsively announced as composed of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, and probably Kentucky, and possibly Missouri; with a shameful accompaning historical record of a bloody dismemberment and divorce. Contemplate that division, this night, with the mingled sentiments of aversion and of gratitude that it must evoke;—horror at the thought of such a separation, and a grateful sense of the measureless obligation under which we rest, to those who gave or periled their lives for our country's preservation!

Inclusive of Kentucky, the number of square miles in the Southern Confederacy would have been 789,382; on which territory there is to-day a population of 14,629,662 persons. This area, embracing in great proportion some of the fairest and most fruitful lands on the face of the globe, with a small amount of non-arable acreage, and much of that bearing beds of coal and iron and even precious metals in its breast, aggregates a surface measurement equal to the added areas of France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Great Britian and Ireland and Belgium;—which European countries now contain a population of over 161,619,600 inhabitants. Weigh for a

little while, under such a computation and attendant comparisons, the improbabilities of re-union, and the almost certain renewal of strife between the people of the different governments, lately under one flag, and the prospect of a constantly harrassing guerilla warfare!

Two propositions were distinctly and frequently proclaimed by those competent and authorized to speak of the object and purpose and scope of the secession movement—two propositions announced as of cardinal character:—the one, that the institution of negro slavery must be preserved, and the other, that the boundaries of the Confederacy, with slavery guaranteed as a constitutional right, should be extended until the continuous soil of the new government presented a long shore or beach line on the Pacific Ocean;—hardly disguising or affecting to conceal a plan and determination to absorb the entire domain of Mexico—and, perhaps, California; and until at least the main isles of the Caribbean Sea were brought under the governmental authority of the "stars and bars," by actual annexation or a practically equivalent protectorate. With foreign countenance and influence and aid—arising from causes we have not time to specify, and exerted in ways adapted to every exigency, and the most powerful abetment—England with an old grudge against us, and an everliving monarchical dislike; with her colonial possessions of slender tenure on our north, with her hated rival France in the halls of Montezuma—with the hundred and one patent reasons springing out of such a condition of things—to go no farther nor elsewhere for contributing causes and co-operations,—does any intelligent observer or thinker doubt for a moment that the territorial enlargement indicated was or would have been more than probable. Such extension would have given the Confederacy nearly double the land surface already stated, with incalculable treasure for enlightened Caucasian development;—making the square mile jurisdiction over 1,583,000, with a population of over 29,000,000 of people.

But let the boundary lines and the jurisdiction of the Confederacy stand and remain as they unquestionably would have been drawn at the close of a supposed

termination of the war, in 1865, with the Union forces defeated,—(if you can bring yourselves for a moment to tolerate such a supposition); and then meditate upon the inevitable antagonisms of interests and personal and state ambitions that would have abided and grown and intensified, after the cessation of hostilities, under any possible treaty of peace? And out from the gloom of that contemplation and under the sunshine of our saved and sanctified Union be thankful this day, and ever more.

The war of the Rebellion was a war for slavery, on the part of the insurgents. The war for the Union was a war for liberty. The former was avowed. The latter was involved, and developed into statements of particular, aggressive purpose, and actual achievements for freedom, of which we never dreamed at the hour when the tocsin was sounded.

In her proclamation at the commencement of the Secession movement--that which may, perhaps be termed the first overt act of official speech—South Carolina declared by the mouth of her Governor:—"In the Southern States there are two entirely distinct and separate races, and one has been held in subjection to the other by peaceful inheritance from worthy and patriotic ancestors, and all who know the races well know that it is the only form of government that can preserve both, and administer the blessings of civilization with order and in harmony. Anything tending to change and weaken the government and the subordination between the races, not only endangers the peace, but the very existence of society itself." These words of this proclamation were never in any manner or decree questioned or qualified by any member of any convention of any of the other seceding states, when they subsequently joined in the unholy combination for the overthrow of the Union and the establishment of an independent, so-called Confederacy; on the contrary, these words were often quoted or referred to, in such conventions, by leading members, with the highest emphasis of endorsement and approbation.

Our Fathers would not so much as permit the word

slave to appear in the Constitution for the Union. But with its derivatives we find it no less than seven times in the organic act of the Southern Confederacy;—and always there with protectful and propagating significance; save as respects the importation of negroes, free or bound, from "any foreign country,"—which was forbidden.

One of the "new provisions" adopted by the constitutional convention which assembled and held its sessions at Montgomery, Alabama, had this affirmance of the "corner stone existence" of negro slavery:—"The citizens of each state shall be entitled to all the privileges of citizens in the several states, and shall have the right of transit and sojourn in any state in this Confederacy, with their *slaves* and other property; and the right of property in said *slaves* shall not be thereby impaired." And again:—"No *slave* or other person held to service or labor in any state *or territory* of the Confederate States, under the laws thereof, escaping or lawfully carried into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such *slave* belongs, or to whom such service or labor may be due."

And looking east and west, (and mayhap north?) this constitution went on to declare:—"The Confederate States may acquire new territory. In all such territory the institution of negro *slavery*, as it now exists in the Confederate States, shall be recognized and protected by Congress and by the territorial government; and the inhabitants of the several Confederate States and Territories shall have the right to take to such territory any *slaves* lawfully held by them in any of the states and territories of the Confederate States."

And in this relation, consider the sympathy and opinions of a large minority in the Northern States, as indicated during the earlier months and years of the rebellion—as well as prior to that time—not only favoring aggressively, and outside of any alleged deference to our constitutional guarantee, the undisturbed and unchallenged continuance of slavery in the Southern States, but avowedly anxious for the introduction of that insti-

tution into our unstained or self-cleansed commonwealths. What would have been the taunts, and the overt efforts by speech—if never by arms—of citizens, many and able and energetic, in our remaining "Union," to "harmonize" by the comity of transit rights for "slave property," so-called—if no more? What the consequent fretting and demoralization—taking the least of embitterments and assaults upon freedom—even supposing that it did not result in a practical, partial establishment of slavery in the North—had not the soldiers and sailors of the North scourged and utterly defeated the armies of the South?

Our Fathers bequeathed to us a government hitherto unequalled and unapproached in its intrinsic excellence, as a comprehensively drawn circle of means and methods for ensuring freedom, substantial progress, and governmental perpetuity So far as forms are concerned, they endowed their children with political institutions that provide a perfect right of legislative representation; with a system of courts for the trial and adjudication of all questions of deference in the legislative enactments to an incomparable constitution, and the determination of disputes between states and individuals, and between one citizen and another; and with an adequate, many-handed power of lawful execution. This government of our Fathers having stood the test of more than a century, is no longer an experiment. Any one in our midst may yet—as many have done in the past—argumentatively present and insist upon the alleged beauties and comparative advantages of another and different system of rule; —and, indeed, in this, and one other license to which I shall allude, the very largeness of our liberty may be healthfully exemplified;—but the audiences for such advocacies have grown less and less, with regular decline, after the first novelty-hearing of voice and text; and from the following of fanatics and fools, promise to dwindle to the inarticulate echo of the silly speaker's words. With a remedy for every wrong appointed for our assertion, and with never any cause for complaint in that respect—the administration of the laws, at times, being alone at fault—there is absolutely no excuse for revolution or

rebellion; and treason is the baldest of treachery, and disloyalty dishonor. All serious expressions of favor for the latter should be promptly confronted by the neighborly patriot with appropriate deprecating and admonition; and the known, well understood, invariably inflicted penalty for the former should be death.

By their service in the Union Army or Navy during the Civil War, our comrades were the true defenders of the homes and firesides of their foes. The battles won under our flag were never sectional or personal victories; triumphs which in exquisite illustration of the proverbs of heaping coals of fire on an enemy's head, were thrice blessed for and unto those who in ignorance or malignant passion—stoutly, indeed, and with splendid courage—maintained for so long a time the wicked cause of the so-called Confederate States of North America.

Now, whatever may be said or written, in and of the truth, or in an indulgent and partial temper of affection, for the leading captains or councillors of the rebellion who have deceased—in behalf of the memory of superior types of men, pure in their private life, intelligent and gallant as officers, and the like—let it be carved on monuments, or beneath statues, or within the mouldings of portrait frames that are to hang in public halls, or let such loving testimony be printed in memorial volumes for general circulation; but whosoever shall seek by such record, or its extension, or by ceremonies of dedication or unveiling of shaft or figure or painting, to uphold or defend the cause of the Southern Confederacy or the official conduct of its founders and managers, as such, commits a gross offence against the Republic, and is morally guilty of a fresh crime of disloyalty and treason against the government—under whose blessed shadow he thus shows himself to be utterly unworthy to longer remain. Again I say, the largest liberty should be and has been illustrated in the freedom of speech extended to and preserved for disputants in behalf of other forms and institutions of government, for which greater happiness and prosperity may be claimed in behalf of citizens or subjects. And that freedom of utterance should be supported thoroughly, to outermost lines already indicated—

even and ever permitting the surviving soldiers and statesmen of the Confederacy to orally confess and parade their unchanged opinions, for the maintenance of which they manfully strove; provided they invariably join an acknowledgment of complete and irreversible defeat. Such has been and is the prevailing charitable disposition of the Union soldiers and sailors who participated in putting down the Rebellion. The authors and supporters of the late insurrection against our Republic, have not and and never have had any shadow of reason to complain of lack of generous and liberal consideration on the part of their triumphant foes. For every man who was an officer in the Confederate service, military, naval or civil, and who now holds a commission from the general Government at Washington—as, for one, I rejoice to know that thousands of them do—is a living monument of the unsurpassed if not unparalleled magnanimity of the Union victors.

Lord John Russell, in his history of the English Government and constitution, curtly and with wise and summary precision and dismissal, said: "Many definitions have been given of liberty. Most of them deserve no notice." In such, almost contemptuous, manner did he dismiss a vast volume of synonyms and comparisons and contrasts. Neither our few remaining moments of indulgent time nor any expediency for instruction or suggestion, admits of our dealing with the attempts to comprehensively explain, in brief and satisfactory phrase, the meaning of the precious letters as they spell that word—as we in our hearts understand it, when said or sounded in prose or song. But as to something of the practical definitions, written in the blood of our heroes during the civil war, it is our final privilege to speak this night.

Our children are to be called upon to remember at this time, that before the Civil war the grossest form of slavery existed in the so-called Confederate States; and that its malign influence demoralized and debauched communities and citizenship, in the Northern as well as the Southern commonwealths, to that degree that it had become a doubtful question to all thoughtful observers,

whether its baneful effects upon the individual master or slave was to be equally deplored with its emasculating influence upon national politics. To us contemporaries, all this is sadly, wearisomely familiar. But we should testify respecting it, when it is being sought to contradict or wholly cover it from a righteous recollection.

We know what the war for the Union did by way of literally extirpating the curse of human bondage; and this is one of the days in the year when no one should feel restricted to nodding or whispering about the terrible evil, and all its clusters of inseparable, malarious concomitants and consequences. Well said the famous Irish orator and emancipator, O'Connell: "Slavery is the sum of all villanies."

And it came to pass, that with respect to the actual relation and rule of serfdom, the war for the Union decreed Liberty.

Liberty to labor. It cut the iron shackles of the negro slave, and for him, and for the use of his emancipated hand, it caused the severed links to be melted and moulded into implements of husbandry and the tools of free, wage-returning toil.

Liberty to learn. The lines of the primer at which comparatively few of the race enthralled had even dared to take a stealthy glance, or over whose pages in hidden solitude the curious and ambitious slaves had only been able to see a blurred surface of indecipherable signs, was opened and outspread upon the lap of the Yankee schoolmarm, now duly installed in their midst. And around her knees gathered a motley group of black, curly-pated youngsters and straight-but unkempt haired juvenile representatives of the "poor white trash" of the district; while over her shoulders peered the Sambos and Dinahs of the neighboring plantations, young and old—all alike anxious to be taught in the mysteries of the alphabet and the art of orthography. And soon, to these almost equally benighted pupils, the leaves of the little book or chart of instruction became luminous with the light of intelligence. And the eyes of the African, once endowed with the power of reading-discernment, were quickly transferred by him to the pages of the long coveted vol-

umes, wherein they could see for themselves the printed song of Moses, and the apocalyptic description of the beautiful City of God.

And with respect to both master and man, in material affairs, there came with the success of the Union arms, Liberty of enterprise. Hitherto there had been in the Southern States an almost entire and exclusive devotion and dedication of large labor interests in the department of agriculture, and its first, raw market preparations; and these confined principally to two great staples; with a neglect and apparent dislike towards the perfecting arts of manufacturing skill, which to most observers was very singular and surprising—as indeed it was inexplicable except on grounds that took in a sense of ease and sufficient opulence, and a secret fear of an infection of dangerous enlightenment by the training of the serf in the craft of the skilled artizan and the chemist. The day of emancipation and national victory, fully ushered in, saw the beginning, small indeed at first, but definite and resolute, of the opening and extension and diversification of domestic and community mechanical industries;—the laying of foundations of pioneer houses for the refiner and the loom—which have since been multiplied at such ratio as to promise a day close at hand, or not very far distant, when the factory upon or adjacent to the wonderfully productive fields of the South shall be adequate, with vat and jenny, for their every cane of sugar and the fibrous blossom of their every cotton plant.

And affecting the people both North and South—especially, of course, the latter—far beyond anything which it has been customary to concede, there came to this country, with the final overthrow of the Rebellion, Liberty of thought. With respect to which may be instructively considered not only or merely that which was audacious and boldly defiant among men in the States that sought to secede—which was matter of surface and commonplace observation; but that liberty of contemplation which was not permitted, which was kept from or stamped out of mind, so to speak, by the thoroughly informed and acute leaders and controllers of society, who saw or understood what ought not to be

even mentally challenged or doubted, if a perfectly safe uniformity of belief and conversation and action was to be obtained or preserved. And here it was, that thousands of honest minds and hearts among the middle classes and in every division of the white population of the Southern States, were fully possessed by a prejudice, carefully cultivated and guarded in them, to that intensity that made them fiercely intolerant of the slightest hint or manifestation of a dislike towards the institution of slavery; to say nothing of a cultivated readiness to do battle on such a basis, and a justifying conviction in favor of the quickest and most cruel methods of suppression and exiling against any who would presume to speak distinctly and fully in behalf of the freedom of all men and the enslavement of none. And in the North, not a few were saturated with the same satanic feeling and impulse; sincere and conscientious supporters of their political or ecclesiastical colleagues of the Confederate South. The war and the winning changed all this.

Liberty of speech. How could there be any in the South? How much must it have been hampered and impaired in the North, under the conditions already outlined? Liberty of speech, of course, of course, there was not, nor anything approaching it, in the States that attempted to secede, and in portions of the bordering States, when the war for the Union began. Liberty, privilege there was not there to even speak her name, or invoke her presence or slightest blessing, in audible voice. The very license of the orator on the national anniversary platform in the South, was something of studied and extremely sensitive solitude; a caution and carefulness unwritten, indeed, but none the less well understood among those who might and did with prominence and general approbation occupy that position in that portion of our country on that natal day. And as for the common communications of the masses of the people, the mere pronouncing of the word or one of its unmistakable synonyms, in many Southern localities, was certain to rouse hateful suspicion against the speaker, or was a sufficient signal of itself for overt and summary acts of indignity or castigation or banishment.

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Liberty: it was not so much as to be named amongst them!

Nor time, nor need to choose from the chapters of outrages in the North, punishing and forbidding free speech for freedom; often culminating in the destruction of the press, the dwelling, perhaps the life of the valiant champion. The war for the Union embraced the cause of free speech, North and South. Let us proclaim its victories, and preserve them.

O, sweet Spirit of Liberty! We would not pause to speculate with the philosophers and the schoolmen, in efforts to distinguish with verbal precision the breadth of the lines or the exact depths of the gulf that separates thy dominions from those presided over by the evil genii of licentiousness and anarchy. We may not ascend and dwell upon the mountain tops with the poets, who seek with fartherest vision to scan and to picture of the mighty landscapes over which thy beneficence broods, and whereon it should always descend and forever rest,—fanned by the soft zephyrs of thy love and lighted by the benignant glow of thy celestial fires. Poor, weak earthy creatures, that we are; incapable of more than a momentary appreciative glimpse at the perfect realm of freedom.

But one thing we do devoutly hope. One thing we do religiously believe. One thing under thy Heavenly invocation we even dare to proclaim. Within the unbroken, uncontracted boundaries of this great American commonwealth, for all time to come, with amplest room for every enlightened and enlightening thought, with invitation for freest utterance by every conscientious mind, and despite—expecting—desiring—the temporary, personal, partizan alienations of the hour, all rational plans and problems, claimed to be promotive of self-government, may be heard and tested—if at all, with us—with peaceful practices and loyal hearts.

Beyond the geographical confines of this republic, which must never be diminished, our political sympathies shall outflow, as the example of our administrations, in proportion to their fidelity to our governmental principles, must edify and inspire; but as we have no authority beyond, we can assume no responsibility, and

entertain no absolute faith. Within, within our country's boundaries, we are resolved, O gracious Spirit, that Liberty and Union shall abide: the written constitution of our fathers, with all its powers and limitations, and the amendments thereunto, being inviolably maintained.

And with this trust and vow, who shall most, who best shall labor and fulfil? Who watch with keenest sight and steadiest vigil? Who shall be wisest to guard? Most willing to sacrifice, in order to enhance the glory of the Nation and the happiness of all the people? Who else —equal to, if not before all others, during the few remaining, swift-fleeting years of the nineteenth century, —who else, if not the comrades of the Grand Army of the Republic?

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